

# GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

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## **WHEN REQUIRED**

The Novato General Plan establishes goals and policies for future growth and development in the Novato area. The General Plan includes map designations as well as written policies. A General Plan Amendment is required in order to change any of the text or maps in the General Plan.

## **PREAPPLICATION REVIEW**

You should discuss your proposal with a Planning Division staff member prior to submitting an application. Staff will assist you in defining your proposal and advise you of supporting materials that would help in reviewing the amendment.

General Plan Amendment applications may be combined with rezoning/prezoning applications. You should discuss the appropriateness of a combined application with a Planning Division staff member prior to submittal.

## **APPLICATION**

The submittal requirements for a General Plan Amendment application are listed on the reverse of this page. Incomplete applications are often the main cause of delays in processing. Please submit each of the items listed but by all means call the Department of Community Development if you have any questions. We recommend that you submit three copies for staff to review for completeness prior to submitting the multiple copies required. A Planner will be assigned to review the application for completeness.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

General Plan Amendment applications are subject to the Environmental Review process, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Please refer to the separate handout titled "Environmental Review" which contains submittal requirements for an Environmental Data Submission and a description of the Environmental Review process. The Environmental Data Submission is reviewed for completeness with the other project application materials. An Initial Study will then be prepared by staff.

## **SCHEDULING**

The number of times the City can amend its General Plan each year is limited by state law. When it has been determined that a complete application has been submitted, copies of the proposal are sent to reviewing agencies and departments for their comments. Processing time from acceptance to City Council hearing is four to six months if a Negative Declaration is recommended and about one year if an EIR is required.

Completion of an Initial Study by staff will result in a determination as to whether a Negative Declaration or an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be required. One of these documents must be prepared prior to a hearing on the application. A Negative Declaration usually requires a minimum of three months of preparation, an EIR ten months.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

After the application is accepted and prior to the Planning Commission hearing, Planning staff will work with the applicant and interested members of the public to evaluate the proposal and prepare a staff report and recommendation.

At the public hearing, the Planning Commission will hear all appropriate testimony and act to recommend the City Council approval of the Negative Declaration or EIR, and the amendment, or to deny the application.

## **CITY COUNCIL ACTION**

At the public hearing, the City Council will hear all appropriate testimony and act to approve the Negative Declaration or EIR and General Plan Amendment or deny the application.

## **RESULT**

Actions by the City Council are final. General Plan Amendments are approved by City Council resolution and are effective immediately.

NOTE: You may request to receive notice of any proposal to adopt or amend any of the following: the Novato General Plan, a specific plan, or chapters of the Municipal Code affecting development. Please use the separate form titled "Request for Notification of General Plan or Municipal Code Amendments."

## **GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT - SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS**

In order to file an application for a General Plan Amendment on your property you must submit the items listed below.

1. Completed Application for Zoning/Planning Action, Cost Recovery Agreement, and application deposit.
2. Fifteen copies of an Environmental Data Submission (see "Environmental Review" handout).
3. Statement describing the purpose of this request. Staff will advise you if additional information is needed to evaluate your proposal.
4. Map indicating property where the proposed General Plan Amendment is requested.

**For further information, please contact the City of Novato, Department of Community Development Planning Division at:**

- 922 Machin Avenue, Novato, CA 94945
- (415) 899-8989
- [www.novato.org](http://www.novato.org)